



Congressman Henry A. Waxman

KEEPING IN TOUCH

August 1996



Environmentalists Thank Waxman for Protecting Drinking Water



Natural Resources
Defense Council

July 9, 1996

The Honorable Henry A. Waxman
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Waxman,

I am writing on behalf of the 250,000 members of the Natural Resources Defense Council to express our deep appreciation for your leadership and commitment in the battle to protect the safety of the nation's drinking water. When water suppliers and their allies in the chemical industry sought to weaken the health protection standards in the Safe Drinking Water Act, you stood firmly against them—and successfully derailed their assault. Then, despite the widespread opposition from this especially hostile Congress, you achieved the near impossible, and managed to secure broad support for a new landmark right-to-know program that will provide American families with crucial information about the level of contamination in their drinking water.

For this and so many other battles that you have fought and won over the years, Americans who care about the quality of our environment and the safety of our water owe you a debt of gratitude. The new drinking water legislation that you have crafted in the face of such a hostile Congress is, once again, a testament to your unparalleled commitment, perseverance and effectiveness.

Thank you once more for being our champion on Capitol Hill.

Sincerely,

John H. Adams
Executive Director

The New York Times

Progress on Pesticides

In a remarkable bipartisan effort, and after more than a decade of trying, House Democrats and Republicans have reached agreement on regulating pesticides in food. This is a welcome and indeed surprising achievement given the House's 18-month effort to roll back important environmental protections.

The compromise negotiated in recent days gives something to the food industry and something to environmental and consumer groups. It would do away with the 38-year-old Delaney clause, the law that prohibits adding cancer-causing substances to processed foods but does not apply to fresh foods, which are allowed to contain cancer-causing residues.

Under the agreement, Delaney would be replaced by a broader but still tough standard for all pesticides regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. The new standard would allow pesticide residues in processed and raw foods as long as there was a "reasonable certainty of no harm" to consumers. Reasonable certainty is generally defined as a one-in-a-million chance of causing cancer.

As a practical matter, that is actually more stringent than what is sometimes allowed today. The fact that Delaney does not apply to fresh foods has led to bizarre circumstances in which a new, safer pesticide on raw tomatoes, for example, might be rejected because it formed a carcinogenic residue when processed as tomato paste or tomato soup, while an older pesticide, apt to cause more cancer deaths, was retained. With technology that can measure even the most minuscule risk of

cancer posed by food substances, the food industry, supported by a decade-old report from the National Academy of Sciences, has long argued that Delaney's absolutist approach is outmoded.

The agreement favors national uniformity for pesticide-residue tolerances, which was sought by the food industry, although a state can still put warning labels on products that might pose a particular risk to its population. For consumers, the agreement calls for the E.P.A. to make more information about pesticides available through supermarket booklets. In addition, the agreement specifically takes into account the different effects that pesticides have on infants and children and offers them special protection.

Apart from its details, the agreement is most remarkable for how quickly it came together. Updating the Delaney clause has been a subject of Congressional debate since about 1980. A 1993 Clinton Administration proposal, offered in response to a Federal appeals court decision that would have required the E.P.A. to stringently enforce Delaney in pesticides, went nowhere.

But with the court ruling still driving E.P.A. pesticide policy and an election campaign around the corner, longtime House members and frequent adversaries — Thomas Bliley, a Virginia Republican, and Henry Waxman of California and John Dingell of Michigan, both Democrats — sat down and in just about a week reached agreement.

After an expected favorable vote by the full House this week, the hard work of three determined Congressmen deserves approval by the Senate and the Administration.



WAXMAN RECEIVES WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE AWARD

Congressman Waxman receives award for his outstanding leadership and commitment to protection of Earth's ozone layer.

House accepts Waxman's proposal to toughen protections for infants and kids.

THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

All of us tend to focus more on what's wrong than on what's right. Even with our economic challenges, we shouldn't lose sight that there's a lot of good news to cheer.

Good News: A Stronger Economy...

1992 - The federal budget deficit was \$290 billion, the highest share of the gross domestic product (GDP) in history.
Now - The federal budget deficit is expected to be \$117 billion at the end of fiscal year 1996, a reduction of sixty percent in four years.

1992 - The unemployment rate was consistently above 7%.

Now - The unemployment rate is 5.3%. (Bureau of Labor Statistics).

1992 - The U.S. economy was less competitive than those of Japan, Germany, Denmark, and Switzerland.

Now - The U.S. economy will be ranked the world's most competitive for the third consecutive year.

1992 - As a share of GDP, the U.S. budget deficit was larger than that of Japan, Germany, and France.

Now - As a share of GDP, the U.S. has the lowest deficit of any major economy in the world.

1992 - From 1989-1992, the six other major economies in the world created two and a half times more jobs than the U.S.

Now - Since 1992, the U.S. has created more new jobs than all six of those countries combined.

But Child Poverty is Persistent

According to a recent UNICEF study, the U.S. has the highest poverty rate for children of any of the rich industrialized nations, and poor American children are worse off than poor children in these other nations.

Nothing conflicts more with American values and ideals than the disparity in the treatment of children in a nation that houses both the poorest and the wealthiest children of the industrialized nations.

We must do all we can to change policies that keep more than one in five American children in poverty.

Raising the Minimum Wage

Our first job is to increase the minimum wage. Nearly 2/3 of minimum wage earners are adults working to support families. The buying power of the current minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour is at a forty-year low and keeps families with children in poverty and families on welfare from joining the ranks of the working class.

President Franklin Roosevelt first enacted a minimum wage in 1938 and bipartisan majorities in Congress have raised the minimum wage seven times since that time. Three of the raises were enacted by Republican Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, and Bush.

After the Republican leadership unsuccessfully attempted to block consideration of minimum wage legislation, I voted for a ninety-cent increase on May 23. The Senate has passed similar legislation, and I will do all I can to enact this increase into law.

Waxman Brings AIDS Funds to L.A.

Congressman Waxman joins President Clinton at the White House for the signing of legislation to renew funding for the Ryan White CARE Act.



Congressman

Henry A. Waxman

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Official Business

Henry A. Waxman

M.C.
Bulk Rate
Car-r. Presort WS

Postal Patron—Local
29th Congressional District
California